

meet. The competition on Sunday has hurt Columbus badly, but I think there is a domino perspective here and the first domino is probably Atokad and the second one is Columbus. They're not the last ones, they're the first ones so that's why this bill is now critical. We need it badly out at Columbus. Columbus has assumed an optimistic position. They have completed several hundred thousand dollars worth of capital improvements the last two years and they tell me that just a week ago they accepted, or they let bids for lighting, so they are going to run races at night at Columbus. They're optimistic about the future, but they can't be and they won't be unless we have this bill in place and like all big bills, it's almost an act at this point and there is some things in there that some of us like and some of us don't like, but on balance I think it's been worked on very conscientiously and studiously for several months and I, for one, can certainly sign off on it now and I would urge the body to do likewise. Thank you.

SPEAKER NICHOL PRESIDING

SPEAKER NICHOL: Senator Pirsch, please.

SENATOR PIRSCH: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, members of the body, you've heard about the small tracks, you've heard about Ak-Sar-Ben. We have here what I think is the best of both worlds, the parimutuel world and Nebraska's. The committee has heard bills of this type, at least for the last two years that I have been there, and we are very cautious. We were cautious last year because we did not want to base a reduction in tax on the fear of what might happen. But this bill, this amended bill has safeguards to ensure that if the level of proceeds remains the same or increases, that percentage of tax remains the same. And at the same time the entire world of horses, both at the small tracks and throughout the industry, even the quarter horse industry, will receive some of these benefits from the exotic betting percentages. You know we have talked constantly about economic development, what to bring into the state for economic development, for tourist attractions, and our parimutuel racing is indeed both of those. Also at the small tracks we were told continually that the economic development created the tourist attraction and resulting revenues from that increases. Even their agricultural sector benefits from this because pay goes up, grain goes up, feed grain. We have helped and in some cases have held